CHAPTER 8

'I Am Not Here to Just Be *En Vogue*'

Talking about the Politics of Dislocated Filmmaking, the Clarity of the 'Third Eye' and Having a Place in Your Country's Film Memory with Egyptian-British Director Khaled El Hagar

Ruxandra Trandafoiu and Roger Shannon

This chapter emerges from two interviews conducted by Roger and Ruxandra with Egyptian-British director Khaled El Hagar. Khaled El Hagar's career debuted in the United Kingdom in 2000 with the feature film *Room to Rent*. At the time, producer and film professor Roger Shannon was Head of Production at the British Film Institute (BFI), a period during which he championed the work of migrant filmmakers in the UK, like Khaled El Hagar. Trained at the National Film and Television School (NFTS) in the UK and now an A-list director in the Arabic market, El Hagar continues to draw inspiration from his life and work in-between his two homes in Cairo and Birmingham. As the interview transcripts (in the Postscript to this volume) reveal in quite a lot of detail, the educational and professional experiences acquired in Egypt and then the UK are intertwined and inseparable, as far as his life and craft are concerned. As El Hagar himself recognizes, while his film narratives are shaped and coloured by his Egyptian roots, his themes are deliberately controversial, stemming from his love of creative freedom cultivated during his time in England. The braiding of intercultural experiences also gave El Hagar's work a certain robustness. Omar Kholeif, who wrote about El Hagar's 'sexual dissidence', which has occasionally been a point of criticism in his native Egypt, described him thus:

> *El Hagar, which translates roughly as 'The Rock', is an apt moniker considering the sheer resilience that the filmmaker has had to endure in order to continue producing narrative pictures. His films have been banned, censored and the filmmaker himself has survived a period of exile from Egypt after his graduation film* A Gulf Between Us *(1991) was shown to an Egyptian audience in 1995, instigating a media stir. (Kholeif 2012: 68)*

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Consequently, Roger and Ruxandra's interviews with Khaled El Hagar pay credit to two of El Hagar's most important achievements. On the one hand, El Hagar is part of a generation of filmmakers that have revitalized European cinema by imbuing it with migrant, diasporic and 'cross-cultural' experiences, mixed with non-Western 'aesthetic paradigms' and narratives (Berghahn and Stenberg 2010a: 2). As Roger Shannon wrote previously, 'it is the depth and the range of his [El Hagar's] films that resonate with audiences, as he shuttles between cultures and genres with an ease and a versatility, taking in comedies, dance films, popular musicals and contemporary dramas with a social cutting edge, and all filmed with Khaled's palate of "kitsch bazaar"' (Shannon 2007). On the other hand, the impact of El Hagar's work is felt in bringing Egyptian and Arab audiences closer to considering uncomfortable subjects, such as Arab–Israel relations glimpsed through intercultural love (*A Gulf Between Us*, 1994), migration, identity and homosexuality (*Room to Rent*, 2000), sectarian divisions (*Lust*, 2010), the burden of history and the nature of power (*Sins of the Flesh*, 2016) and identity and trans rights in El Hagar's ongoing projects. Kholeif thus credits El Hagar with a 'shift in what is normative and non-normative minority representation' (2012: 71) in Arab culture.

This chapter discusses some of these key themes through a detailed exploration of El Hagar's positionality as a dislocated filmmaker, at the interface between African, Middle Eastern and European cultures and cinemas. It achieves this by quoting from two interviews conducted in 2013 and 2022. As already mentioned, the full transcripts are available in the Postscript to this book. This approach is inspired by the work Sarah Cardwell and others conducted for the Television Series published by Manchester University Press. Based on interviews with top writers and showrunners in the UK, among which Andrew Davies (Cardwell 2014), these texts not only explored authorship in the television industry, but also brought together the insights of academics and practitioners to explore media practices in connection to screen content and audiences. Andrew Davies had already been the subject of two interviews published, as transcripts, in 2007 (Cartmell and Whelehan 2007: 239–51), that sought to better understand processes of adaptation. Trandafoiu, together with Carol Poole, continued this trend while interviewing screen producer Julia Stannard about her approach and practice while working on classic text to screen adaptations (see Poole and Trandafoiu 2020; Trandafoiu and Poole 2021). In this chapter, Ruxandra and Roger continue to expand on the idea that creative practice is best understood through a fruitful dialogue between those researching screen cultures and film and television

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makers, an approach which also has the advantage of producing new insights into industry practices that go beyond those established by British cinema. In this chapter we also want to return to the concept of adaptation – cultural and social – as it is circumscribed and illuminated by dislocated filmmaking.

'You Can See the Truth. You Are the Third Eye'

Writing in 1903, American sociologist W.E.B. du Bois asked, 'How does it feel to be a problem?' (Du Bois 2018: 8). Du Bois defined 'this sense of always looking of at one's self through the eyes of others' (Du Bois 2018: 9) as 'double consciousness', a powerful depiction of the Black experience in the United States. Over the next one hundred years, 'double consciousness' was appropriated and applied to diverse experiences of many individuals or groups who live with identity doubleness or twoness, at the intersection of at least two discourses and experiences, and often from a minority position, as subaltern subjects. In this chapter we rely on this wider understanding of 'double consciousness' as the lived experience of being both 'us' and 'other'.

For filmmakers like Khaled El Hagar, who have experienced migration and dislocation, such experiences are entirely familiar. Becoming a 'problem' in his own country due to Egypt's censorship laws and fearing being drafted into the army at the time of the first Iraq War, Khaled El Hagar and his wife Janice Rider, a costume designer, moved to Birmingham. Living in-between two cultural spaces had certain advantages, but it also brought about a feeling of alienation, an ambiguity. As El Hagar recounts:

> *You always have a second home; you always see the two countries from a distance. I am equally involved in the two countries, but I can always escape. I remember meeting once a young Indian filmmaker and he said, 'You always have another country, you can always run from England to Egypt or the other way around, when there is no work, for example, or the situation changes' and I think it's true. It makes you unique or strange in both countries, you are always looked upon as the outsider from both sides.*

Du Bois's 'double consciousness' encapsulates the notion that an uncomfortable identity position leads to acuity of vision or 'consciousness'. Rejection and

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alienation are partially offset by heightened and critical observation and understanding. Postcolonial and diasporic theory further elaborates du Bois's duality into a triad to better signal this questionable positivity. The 'Third Space' (Bhabha 1994) of postcolonial theory thus transforms the interstitial space of opposition and conflict, typical of the Black experience in the United States, into one of 'translation', 'a place of hybridity', of '*negotiation* rather than *negation*' (Bhabha 1994: 37, emphasis in the original), more relevant to migrant experiences in Europe. Thus, the unique perspective of a complex (doubled or in-between) positionality gives rise, in El Hagar's own view, to a rich imaginary that leads to inspiration and new ways of working and creating:

> *I think both experiences feed each other but moving to England opened for me a new way of thinking through meeting new people and encountering a different cinema. That had a big impact. Returning to Egypt meant returning to a place I was familiar with. For the first five years I was thinking differently from everybody around me. I still had this idea of freedom from England – you can do what you want – but then sadly I discovered I couldn't do that. You must work trying to find your way between the lines. But my first few years back in Egypt were quite daring for Egypt and the reason for that was my experience in England.*

The 'new way of thinking' El Hagar reflects on is equivalent to the new ways of seeing reflected in theories of dislocation. It is fed by 'double exposure', defined as 'a superimposition of two images – of home and abroad, past and present, dream and everyday life' (Boym 2001: xiv). In film theory this vision is called 'diasporic optic' and described as a 'visual grammar that seeks to capture the dislocation, disruption and ambivalence' typical to transnational lives (Moorti 2003: 359). 'Double exposure' or 'diasporic optic' translates alienation into acuity. As El Hagar explains, 'because I see from a third perspective, I notice what's dangerous and what's good at the same time in either context.' This optic is characterized by the 'desire to inhabit many places' and therefore is 'a sideways glance rather than as a backwards look', 'simultaneously familiar, alien, domestic, national and transnational' (Moorti 2003: 359). El Hagar's description is more powerful, in that his redefinition of Moorti's 'diasporic optic' as a 'third eye' better reflects the importance of 'seeing' in cinema: 'I think it's important because when you write you write with a third brain, you are not that involved in all the propaganda, be it in

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Egypt or in England, and you can see the truth. You are the third eye.' The concept of the 'third eye' and embodying the 'third eye' informs El Hagar's filmmaking aesthetic, as well as his understanding of the filmmaker's role in history, on which he reflects further on. It also connects to the familiar category of 'Third Cinema', which is discussed in the Introduction to this book.

'I Need to Work; I Don't Need to Dream'

Living in-between Egypt and England inevitably resurrects the spectre of colonial legacies. The 'Third Space' is a contested concept specifically because it can be seen in negative terms, as an attempt by the colonizer to rewrite the identity of the colonized. In failing to achieve this deletion of identity, the colonizer produces a 'Third Space' of hybridity, which Bhabha (1994) chooses to see as a negotiation, despite the power imbalance at play. Yet, as Ponzanesi reminds us, 'spaces of otherness, neither here nor there', which 'are simultaneously physical and mental' (Ponzanesi 2012: 677), are established through a continuous dialogue with colonial practices. They are what Foucault (1984) called *des espaces autres*, heterotopias that recreate simultaneous inclusion and exclusion (Ponzanesi 2012: 677–78). This ambivalence between opportunity and encountering specific barriers permeates El Hagar's work, but also defines his personal and professional experiences.

El Hagar's comments on his encounters with racism, working as a young but ambitious filmmaker in the UK, feed thus into his observations about the politics of perception within the film industry. Despite the assumed transnationalization and cosmopolitanization of working practices in film and television, historical legacies of inequality loom large. They circumscribe El Hagar's depiction of his attempts to negotiate cultural differences among the French and British financiers of his feature film *Room to Rent* (2000), a story of love and immigration set in London, which features an Egyptian screenwriter (played by Saïd Taghmaoui) as its main character:

> *I think that in the beginning there was a lot of misunderstanding about Arab culture. In England people are more aware of Indian culture because they grow up with an Indian corner shop. For the British financiers, Arab culture was a bit further away, they didn't understand the Arab theme. The French do understand*

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> *it, because they have six million Arabs or more, so it's part of their culture, like Indian culture here is part of British culture. I think the French understood easily what I wanted to talk about; the British were trying to translate everything to how they think about Arabs, not to how Arabs think.*

Filmmakers have always engaged, to some extent, in practices of mobility, but mobilities between what are still seen as the 'centres' and 'peripheries' of the filmmaking industries tend to reproduce old colonial hierarchies. This perpetuated power imbalance is evident in El Hagar's professional experiences after *Room to Rent*. Despite accumulating positive reviews and numerous prizes at international film festivals, El Hagar struggled to find further similar opportunities in the UK. He notes that 'after *Room to Rent*, it was a big struggle to make another film. In my country I have now made nine feature films and four big TV series; I would have never made them in England.' This lack of opportunity was partially caused by the political climate that descended over the creative industries in the Western world after 9/11, when stories written from ideologized perspectives on Arab culture began to be favoured. As El Hagar humorously says, 'the French have more of a mentality of cultural invasion. The British have a mentality of oil or spice invasion.' Consequently, British financiers became unwilling to absorb the comedy melodramas that El Hagar wanted to make, about the minutiae of multicultural lives, and turned towards profit-making projects that resonated more with British audiences, despite their pronounced political and ideological flavour. As Ezra and Rowden reflect, the post-9/11 transnational cinema confirmed the 'ideologically determined resistance of commercial cinema to the recognition of radical political commitment under any category other than those of greed and fanaticism' (Ezra and Rowden 2006: 10–11). Yet, the lack of opportunity in El Hagar's case seemed to have deeper and more troubling roots, going back to the same colonial legacy and its racism, both casual and instrumentalized. It curtailed El Hagar's potential to continue to develop his style as a diasporic filmmaker:

> *I had plans for a couple of scripts; I didn't just want to make* Room to Rent *but also make two or three other films that people would recognise as Khaled El Hagar's filmmaking. But it never happened. I'm not making comparisons, but Pedro Almodovar makes colourful, flamboyant, deeply Spanish movies; they have a similar feel, culture, and colours, so he's become like a school of*

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> *filmmaking. People talk about Almodovar style films. When you allow filmmakers to do that, they develop a different voice. If you are only allowed to do one film and that's it, that doesn't happen.*

The decision to eventually move back to his homeland seems therefore not to be a unique decision, but one shared with a whole generation of migrant filmmakers:

> *Actually, myself with other writers and producers, tried for over two years to do something; I wrote several scripts (e.g.* Sex for Happiness*). But all of us, foreigners living in England, realised that we don't have enough years to try and make just one film in five years. As a filmmaker I need to work; I don't need to dream.*

The experiences of El Hagar and his colleagues are an indication of the intersection between a new political climate that favoured the association of Arab themes with religious zealousness and insurgency, and postcolonial hangovers that looked suspiciously upon migrant filmmakers. Consequently, El Hagar talks openly about his experience of racism, which ranged from casual remarks to open hostility:

> *I think that in England you start to feel dislocated when you are hit with racism. You think that you are like everybody else, you are married to an English woman, you have a British baby, you live in an English house [laughs], until somebody tells you that you ARE different. You suddenly think – I am different, I don't belong here, people do not want me to belong here.*

In his musings, El Hagar draws important lessons from the knowledge accumulated through making a successful film in the UK, but also the lack of opportunity that came after. In his case, the paradoxical mix of presence and absence of opportunity led to important insights into the formation of his identity as an Egyptian-British filmmaker and, in particular, the intercultural aesthetics he cultivated while working in-between European and Egyptian cultural spaces, that continue to define his film and television work and upon which he reflects in the following part of this chapter.

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The 'Artistic Technician'

In matters of identity, it is important that people self-identify and do not simply accept or adopt an identity imposed from outside. El Hagar has worked as a filmmaker in Europe, Africa and the Middle East. He has trained in Egypt and the UK. He has lived extensively in both Cairo and Birmingham and maintains homes in both locations. He has dual citizenship and a British family. It was important therefore to ask Khaled El Hagar about the identity positioning of his work, but also that of the filmmaker behind the work. His answers show that two key concepts inform his identity as a filmmaker: duality and universality.

> *I am an Egyptian-British filmmaker. I am both. I can move tomorrow to England, and I can make a film. I have no problem with working in different cultures. I remember when I made* Elements of Mine *(2003), a dance film, in Germany [with Norbert Servos], I went to Germany for a quick shoot, and I felt in harmony with all the people. I didn't feel I was coming from a different culture. I just filmed. I always wanted to feel that I am a free filmmaker; nobody can judge me because of my language or where I am from. I am a filmmaker. There is no difference between an Indian and a British doctor. They are both doctors.*

El Hagar's works, including the topics he is interested in and the approaches he chooses, are shaped by the people and places of his practice. They are, therefore, doubled: both Egyptian and British experiences remain important. However, the emphasis El Hagar puts on working in-between cultures also signals a desire for universal assignation. Since in-betweenness has become a common feature of filmmaking, film directors like Khaled El Hagar can move into the mainstream. This is due to increased transnationalism in film and television production, but even more so to the dislocated position of the filmmaker. One could argue that any artist is dislocated from their inherited culture. To step outside the familiar is a prerequisite for creativity and originality. Armed with a set of universal skills, but also individual curiosity and the desire to create, the filmmaker becomes therefore, as El Hagar, points out, an 'artistic technician', universally legitimate:

> *I always thought I am a filmmaker, and I can work in different countries on projects that would be different. I always thought of myself as an artistic*

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> *technician, I can work here, I can work there. But of course, there are limitations when you approach financiers, they always want to bring you to their level of understanding art, they don't just let you fly. So, the problem I'm facing is one of mentality. Especially because as a filmmaker I don't come from a traditional filmmaking country that makes 200 films a year, starting from the time of silent films. I am also different from Black filmmakers. They talk to Europe or to their own people.*

El Hagar pinpoints the natural interculturalism of filmmakers, which is nevertheless held back by old traditional structures. In this view, '"Intercultural" indicates a context that cannot be confined to a single culture. It also suggests movement between one culture and another, thus implying diachrony and the possibility of transformation. "Intercultural" means that a work is not the property of any single culture but mediates in at least two directions' (Marks 2000: 6). Marks' definition of the term 'intercultural' avoids nominating one culture as the dominant one and does not identify an obligatory direction of travel. Instead, intercultural cinema becomes a flowing amalgamation, allowing for multiple comings and goings, in both space and time. However, as El Hagar points out, this liquidity that comes naturally to 'artistic technicians' is constricted by the residual mentality of those who finance films and still work with old labels and categories. Movement is therefore highly regulated, and hierarchies re-emerge based on the cultural provenance or geographical anchoring of the filmmaker. Industry politics thus colludes with old colonial hierarchies to constantly raise new barriers.

However, what many financiers might not recognize is that the in-betweenness, the duality, the interculturalism and 'third eye' optic of filmmakers like Khaled El Hagar can revitalize traditional European modes of cinematic production. Discussing El Hagar's first feature film in the UK, Kholeif praises El Hagar's ability to move in-between aesthetics: 'By bearing a distinctly "Arab" quality within its sonic and aesthetic presentation, *Room to Rent* becomes a unique picture for its ability to form a composite Arab and British film experience' (Kholeif 2012: 69). As El Hagar recounts: 'people say, "Your films are different!" Their look is different, they are a mix between East and West. I have a precise way of shooting and I like beautiful frames; I don't like messy frames. The two cultures come together.' His haptic visuality recalls a sensory experience of place (Marks 2000: 2), typical of dislocated filmmakers. El Hagar sees his approach and aesthetics as being shaped

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by his individual experiences of living in two countries and working in more. In Egypt, he feels freer that other filmmakers to tackle culturally sensitive subjects. In the UK, he was not afraid to bring to the depiction of London on screen the colours and sounds of his native Egypt. Multicultural and historical experiences matter. As Malini Guha observes in her analysis of London and Paris as film locations for features films about migration, the 'migrant imaginary of post-imperial London . . . bears seemingly little relationship to London's post-war modernity as detailed in either popular or official discourse' (2015: 15). The migrant filmmaker, blessed with their 'third eye' optic, is able to see what the foreign visitor, imbued by tourism propaganda, would certainly miss: the reality and the hybridity of living as an 'Other' in a postcolonial city.

The Filmmaker Is Not a Journalist

If the intercultural personal experiences of the filmmaker are essential to understanding the composite identity of the films, then it becomes necessary to understand the role played by lived history. European, Middle Eastern and African cinemas have a tradition of reflecting trauma and conflict, but representing lived history still poses unanswered questions about the role of proximity and distance, spatial and temporal. For El Hagar, the answer is simple: 'I never liked an instantaneous response, and I am not able to write about that. [. . .] People like me are waiting to try and understand events.'

This view was shaped by the 2011 Arab Spring in Egypt. As European interests circled Egyptian filmmakers who were asked to reflect almost instantaneously the Tahrir Square protests and subsequent regime change in their work, El Hagar decided once again to put his 'third eye' optic to work:

> *I was worried when the Muslim Brotherhood took over, I could see things that my Egyptian friends in Tahrir Square couldn't see. Actually, by living abroad, I read more international press, I read more analyses about what is happening in the Middle East more generally. If you do not have access to this information, you are not aware of the whole situation. You don't see the whole reality, of what is happening now. Egyptian filmmakers wanted to make films about the Revolution after three weeks, without really understanding what was happening. This wasn't mature enough, I needed to wait, to understand.*

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El Hagar's in-between position proved to be an advantage again, as he was able to withdraw from the immediacy of the events to a place of analysis, adopting an angle from which, once again, he was able to extrapolate the universal themes he is concerned with, such as change, emotional connections, ambivalent politics and the human condition:

> *I worked with someone who wrote one of the TV series and we were interested in people who didn't go to Tahrir Square because of fear. I was interested in fear and humanity, but also change. Like an earthquake, the Revolution changed people. People who were political proved to be cowards and people who you thought were cowards, suddenly became very political. So, I'm talking about the human condition during hard times.*

While El Hagar acknowledges the opportunity history brings to making politically involved cinema, he is also aware of the duty imposed on the filmmaker:

> *People will be waiting for more political films; people have become more politically involved than before. Before the country was flattened emotionally, whereas now people's emotions are really high, they talk about political issues on Facebook and Twitter, everybody I know has become so involved politically. This will come out in our films. Unless there is a good story, I cannot make a comedy now, I feel I have a duty. But I want to make the right political statement, not the statement that people want me to make. I need to first understand what I am talking about. I am not here to just be* en vogue.

El Hagar's views recall Ezra and Rowden's notion of 'committed' cinema (2006: 10), which is used to describe transnational cinema or cinema produced from a transnational perspective by transnational filmmakers. This is not instantaneous cinema, because the filmmaker is not a journalist living the moment. The right distance – proximity ratio that living in-between cultures affords filmmakers like El Hagar gives them the opportunity to circumscribe the present by looking back and looking forward. Dislocated filmmakers do it all the time. In the case of the Arab Spring, this approach afforded El Hagar a more nuanced and reflexive engagement with the events. He was able to circumscribe immediate events within a certain historical trajectory and bring new insight from the perspective of the 'third eye'.

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By Way of Conclusion: 'I Will Always Be in the Memory of Egyptian Cinema.'

Now in mid-career, El Hagar would be right to think of his legacy. Despite controversial topics, his work continues to equally challenge and entice Arab audiences:

> *The second film I made in Egypt,* Women's Love *(*Hob El Banat*, 2004), is so popular, it has been voted the most popular Egyptian film for that generation. There are thirty million views on YouTube. My film* Lust *(*El Shooq*, 2010) now has over nineteen million views on YouTube. I became part of the Egyptian psyche [laughs]. But in England, nobody has seen them. Some might have seen* Room to Rent *only.*

El Hagar's reflections highlight the ambivalent legacy of dislocated filmmakers and recall the important of opportunity and choice in the industry. Cinematic legacies depend even more on industry culture and politics in the case of in-between filmmakers. Although they always have choices, these choices are ultimately limited. Increased transnationalism has not transformed the close link between cinema and national culture, audiences have not moved beyond certain confines. For El Hagar, this attrition gives an opportunity to reflect on the relationship between migrant filmmakers and their homeland cinemas:

> *I have become one of the top Egyptian filmmakers now. I will always be in the memory of Egyptian cinema. If I died tomorrow, I have ten films, I have TV shows. In England, I am not in the memory of British cinema. I am just this guy who made one film once. That's the difference. In Egypt I am known.*

This may be one of the reasons that El Hagar continues to define himself as an Egyptian-British filmmaker. The hyphenated self-definition is indicative of the importance of 'doubled' and 'third space' experiences for contemporary cinema, but it is also the outcome of the residual power of national identity for cinema and the somewhat ambivalent value of in-betweenness.

Filmmakers like Khaled El Hagar often defy definition, because they do not necessary fit into neat categories. They are ambiguous, in that they can be seen as both successful in their ability to adapt to industry conditions, cultural contexts and historical challenges, and stymied in their creative freedoms and endeavours.

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Like their innovative aesthetic, they perpetually defy fixity. The displacement and hybridity (Marks 2000: 2) that characterize what Marks calls 'intercultural cinema' come from 'the experience of living between two or more cultural regimes of knowledge or living as a minority in the still majority white, Euro-American West' (Marks 2000: 1). This positioning gives rise to a particular kind of politics, as evidenced by El Hagar's transgressions into the realm of uncomfortable or contested themes. His ability to take risks and innovate has placed him in the history of Egyptian cinema. His legacy in the UK, on the other hand, is yet to be ascertained. What we know is that this kind of film work is important, and UK and European cinemas need more of it, not less. A 'third' optic perspective can result in new creative configurations through a process of assembling and 'gathering' once scattered myths, fantasies and experiences (Bhabha 1990: 292), of dislocated people. The films of migrant filmmakers like Khaled El Hagar enrich, as others have highlighted before, national and European cinemas, as well as European identity more generally (see Grassilli 2008; Loshitzky 2010; Bayraktar 2016).

El Hagar epitomizes the important role transnationalism plays in the cinemas that the filmmakers come from or indeed return to. This role is not sufficiently acknowledged in the current literature on transnational cinema, because researchers and critics tend to favour presences – filmmakers who enjoy a certain notoriety in the Western world – rather than absences – filmmakers who have not been offered the chance to continue to work in Europe but have crafted successful careers back home. The emphasis on the contribution of filmmakers from the Global South not only to European cinema, but also to their national cinemas, must thus continue, especially as Europe hardens its borders (Bayraktar 2016: 3). Once encouraged, European mobility is now counteracted with immobility and rebordering practices, as both 'Fortress Europe' and post-Brexit phenomena show. One might wonder what this tendency will do to filmmaking practices in Europe. The mobility–immobility dynamic is a metaphor for migrant filmmakers like Khaled El Hagar who come to Europe, train and are maybe offered initial opportunities, but become stuck in a system where pervasive racism, preferential financing of trendy themes that play with problematic representations and othering tropes prevent migrant or hyphenated filmmakers from achieving their proven potential. Ultimately, this tendency reproduces colonial exclusions and recalls the political significance of film.

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Khaled El Hagar Filmography

Inta Omri (aka *You Are My Life*) (1989) Directed, produced and written by Khaled El Hagar [Short]. Egypt: Goethe Institute, Cairo and MIF.

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Best Script Award (Goethe Institute, Cairo) given by German Jury in Berlin.
Alexander S. Socotti Award: Oberhausen Short Film Festival, Germany.

German Dance Theatre in Egypt (1990) Directed and produced by Khaled El Hagar [Documentary]. Germany: ARTE.

Doody's Dream (1992) Directed and written by Khaled El Hagar [Short]. England: NFTS.

Ahlam Saghira (*Little Dreams*) (1993) Directed and written by Khaled El Hagar [Feature film]. Egypt and Germany: MIF and ZDF.

Rotterdam Film Festival: one of best ten films (audience choice).
Samuelson City Film Award: best film award (Birmingham International Film & Television Festival).
Grand Prix de la Ville d'Amiens: Amiens International Film Festival.
Nomination: The Sutherland Trophy (BFI Awards for Best 1st Feature).
Best Music for a Film: National Egyptian Film Festival.
Best Script Award: Pan African Film Festival of Burkina Faso – FESPACO.

The Saudi National Day (1994) Directed and produced by Khaled El Hagar. London: MBC.

A Gulf between Us (1994) Directed and written by Khaled El Hagar [Short]. England: NFTS.

Milano City Award: Milano Film Festival.
Le Prix Tolerance: VUES D'AFRIQUES Film Festival – Montreal, Quebec.
Certificate of Merit: Chicago International Film Festival.

Theatre and Dreams (1996) Directed and produced by Khaled El Hagar [30-minute drama]. London: MBC.

Room to Rent (2002) Directed and written by Khaled El Hagar [Feature film]. England and France: Channel 4, BFI UK, Studio Canal.

Audience Award – Best Film: Berlin Digital International Film Festival.
Audience Award – Best Film: Turin Film Festival.
Best International Film: Foyle Film Festival, Ireland.
Prix Poitou Charentes: Fespaco Film Festival.
Prix Mevter – Titra: Festival International du Film d'Amour, Belgium.
Audience Award – Best Film: Cologne Mediterranean Film Festival.
Cica Award: Cartage Film Festival.
Cica Award: Milano African Film Festival.

Red Sky at Night (2003) Directed by Khaled El Hagar [Short]. UK: C4.

Hob el Banat (*Women's Love*) (2004) Directed by Khaled El Hagar [Feature film]. Egypt.

Special Mention: Cairo International Film Festival.
Seven Awards at the Egyptian Academy Awards Festival.
Best Director: Amal Arab Film Festival, Spain.

Elements of Mine (2004) Directed and written by Khaled El Hagar [Short]. Germany: ARTE.

Best Performance: Moving Pictures Festival, Toronto, 2004.

Mafeesh Gher Keda (*None but That!*) (2006) Directed by Khaled El Hagar [Feature film]. Egypt: ART.

Best Director/Best Film Song: Egyptian Oscar Song Festival.

Stolen Kisses (*Kobolat Masroka*) (2008) Directed by Khaled El Hagar [Feature film]. Egypt.

Egyptian film sector, winner of 8 acting awards: Alex Film Festival.

El Shooq (*Lust*) (2010) Directed by Khaled El Hagar [Feature film]. Egypt and France: Arabic Movies + France 3B Production.

Best International Film – The Golden Pyramid: Cairo International Film Festival, 2010.

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Best International Actress – Sawsan Badr: Cairo International Film Festival, 2010.
Best International Film and Best Actress: Muscat Film Festival, 2012.
Best Actress: Wahran Film Festival, 2012.
Egypt Official Oscars Entry for 2012.
Dawaran Shoubra (*Shoubra Square*) (2011) Directed by Khaled El Hagar [TV Series (30 episodes)]. Egypt and UK: MIF + BBC WST.
Voted by Critiques Best TV series and Best Director 2011, Human Right Award.
El Baltagy (*The Thug*) (2012) Directed by Khaled El Hagar [TV Series (30 episodes)]. Egypt: CBC.
Farah Laila (Laila's Wedding) (2013) Directed and written by Khaled El Hagar [TV Series (30 episodes)]. Egypt: King Tout Production.
Audience Award, Best TV Drama series.
Shams (*Sun*) (2014) Directed and written by Khaled El Hagar [TV Series (30 episodes)]. Egypt: King Tout Production.
Winner Best TV Drama Series Egypt, 2014.
Haram el Gasad (*Sins of the Flesh*) (2016) Directed and written by Khaled El Hagar [Feature film]. Egypt: Misr International Films, Youssef Chahine.
Best actress, Nahed el Sebai: Oporto International Film Festival, 2017.
Jury Special Award, Best Film: Oporto International Film Festival, 2017.
Winning 3 National awards: Egypt National Film Awards, 2016.
Immobilia Crime Story (2018) Directed by Khaled El Hagar [Feature film]. Egypt: Misr Arabia Films.
Shihana (2020) Directed by Khaled El Hagar [Feature film]. Albear Haddad, Arab Media/SBC.

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